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Ministry of Attorney General
Ministry of Community Services

LEGISLATION TO ELIMINATE MANDATORY RETIREMENT

VICTORIA – Legislation that sweeps mandatory retirement out of the way by offering choices to British Columbians who turn 65 was announced today by Attorney General Wally Oppal.

"We recognize the wealth of skills and experience that mature workers can contribute to services, businesses, government and our economy," said Oppal. "The number of British Columbians over the age of 65 will more than double in the next 25 years, so it is important we prepare for that demographic shift. We want to give mature workers in British Columbia choices to continue their contribution to the workforce, if that is their wish."

Bill 31 implements a key recommendation of the report Aging Well in British Columbia, presented to government by the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues in December 2006. It means people who turn 65 will have the option to keep working.

"We are committed to providing the best system of support for seniors so they can participate fully in their communities and our response to this key recommendation reinforces our commitment," said Community Services Minister Ida Chong. "Opening up opportunities to older British Columbians while eliminating age discrimination is in everyone's interest and giving skilled and experienced people the choice to remain in the workplace just makes sense."

Over the next decade, the Ministry of Economic Development anticipates another million job openings in British Columbia, while only 650,000 students will graduate to fill the labour market.

"It's a timely and needed change," said Dr. Patricia Baird, chair of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues. "People in B.C. are living much longer and we need to facilitate the participation of older adults in all aspects of our social and economic life. We'll all benefit."

The legislation will come into effect Jan. 1, 2008.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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